Consultations on Humanitarian Responses in Urban Areas
Perspectives from Cities in Crisis

World Humanitarian Summit, May 2016

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Foreword

The accelerating trend of urbanization is paralleled by an increasing number of crisis-affected populations residing in cities. Cities and their inhabitants can be directly impacted by natural disasters or conflicts; they can also become a safe haven for forcibly displaced populations. Either way, cities are profoundly affected by crisis and the resulting pressure and competition over scarcer services, housing and livelihoods opportunities.

In line with this trend, humanitarian actors are increasingly working in urban environments. However, recent crises have exposed a number of recurring problems with humanitarian action in cities. Some of these are due to lack of experience by humanitarian agencies on adapting their programs to urban contexts. Others derive from systematic difficulties by the current humanitarian architecture to promote city-level planning, and engage with city systems and stakeholders.

With view to contribute to the World Humanitarian Summit's '*vision for change*', UCLG Task Force On Local and Regional Government Disaster Response and IMPACT, in the framework of the AGORA initiative, have facilitated a series of consultations to identify lessons learnt and recommendations stemming from the humanitarian response in seven cities recently affected by crisis. The exercise has been developed and implemented in conjunction with the Global Alliance for Urban Crises, contributing to the Policy Commitments outlined in its Urban Crises Charter.

Through this document, we are pleased to present a summary of the key findings from the various city consultations. Overall, they point to the need of localising humanitarian coordination and planning mechanisms, of promoting the resilience of communities and city systems as well as enhancing partnerships with municipal stakeholders. This report is accompanied by six city-specific reports, providing a more in-depth overview of challenges and recommendations emerging from each city consultation.

In the coming months, the Global Alliance for Urban Crises and its members IMPACT and UCLG Task Force will continue their cooperation to pilot new humanitarian coordination and planning mechanisms for settlement-based and holistic responses in urban crisis settings. We hope that this work will provide some additional lessons learnt and best practices and ultimately lead to better humanitarian action in cities.

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Background

By 2050 over 70% of the global population will live in urban areas. This accelerating urbanization trend is accompanied by an increasing vulnerability of cities to both natural and man-made disasters. More and more, humanitarian actors are responding to urban crisis, but are poorly equipped to understand and effectively engage with cities' complex socio-economic dynamics and governance structures.

Recognizing these challenges, the World Humanitarian Summit has mandated an Urban Expert Group to identify key recommendations for a better humanitarian response to urban crises. The Urban Expert Group has since proposed the creation of a Global Alliance for Urban Crises, which will act as a vehicle for promoting better humanitarian action in cities. In support of the Global Alliance and within the framework of the AGORA initiative, IMPACT and UCLG Task Force, with the support of City Mayors, have conducted a series of consultations in six cities recently or currently affected by man-made or natural disasters. This report summarises the key findings of the city consultations.

Executive Summary

The consultations singled out a number of challenges which characterize humanitarian response in cities:

- All cities reported a lack of sufficient preparedness, at institutional, structural and community level
- The response to the crisis by local and international actors was divergent, rather than complementary. On the one hand municipalities and other local actors, the first responders, found themselves overstretched, having to respond to increasing needs with scarcer resources. On the other hand international humanitarian actors generally failed to engage with local stakeholders, instead promoting an exogenously coordinated technical, sector-level response. The lack of city-level, multi-stakeholder coordination mechanisms further contributed to this divergence
- As a consequence of the above, humanitarian responses were characterized by a loss of effectiveness, efficiency and relevance. In some cases, the divergence between international and local actors also led to an undermining of local systems and fueled community tensions

The consultations pointed to a set of eight recommendations to improve humanitarian action in urban environments. Humanitarian actors working in cities should:

1. **Systematically engage, build and leverage on local capacity**, notably that of municipalities and service providers, but also of local civil society actors
2. **Adopt settlement-based approaches** as the most appropriate framework for the coordination, planning and implementation of humanitarian action
3. **Mainstream resilience-building of city institutions and communities** in all programming
4. **Deploy more flexible and longer term funding modalities** that enable resilience programming and increased funding to local actors
5. **Establish city-level coordination mechanisms** inclusive of international, national and local stakeholders
6. **Systematically identify mechanisms to build a good mutual understanding** between international and local actors
7. **Invest in Preparedness, Knowledge and Capacity Transfer** to support local stakeholders
8. **Mainstream action aimed to promote harmony and mitigate tensions among communities** in all programming

About the Study

To contribute to the urban agenda of the WHS and to the Global Alliance for Urban Crises, IMPACT Initiatives and UCLG's Task Force on Local and Regional Government Disaster Response, chaired by Cités Unies France, facilitated a series of consultations in six cities affected by natural or man-made disasters between February and April 2016.

Targeted cities included Bangui (Central African Republic), Port au Prince (Haiti), Mafraq (Jordan), Tacloban and Bogo (Philippines) and Gaziantep (Turkey). Consultations were co-led by IMPACT, UCLG and the Mayors of each city.

Figure 1: Overview of consultation process in each city

1. Agreement with mayors	2. Stakeholder engagement	3. Report preparation
• First meeting with mayors to confirm buy-in and willingness to co-chair the process • Agreement with mayors on stakeholders to attend consultations • Agreement with mayors on city-specific questions	• Country-level stakeholders invited to be part of the consultations • Interviews with key stakeholders conducted prior to consultation workshop • Consultation workshop held with all stakeholders to discuss, agree and endorse challenges and recommendations identified	• Preparation of city-specific summary reports and endorsement from stakeholders • Drafting of overall report in consultation with Urban Expert Group • Dissemination of report through a side event at the World Humanitarian Summit, including presentations by mayors

Each city consultation included a range of actors that played a role in the crisis response, such as municipal and national authorities, service providers, civil society and international aid actors. Each city identified key lessons and guidance to inform future responses and translated city-specific challenges and recommendations into concrete propositions on how to improve humanitarian responses to urban crises beyond their city case-study.

This reports outlines the overall challenges and recommendations identified through the city-specific consultations, and will be launched during a specific event as part of the World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul in May 2016. City specific reports, endorsed by local mayors and other participants to the consultations, outline city-specific challenges and recommendations and can be found in annex to this overarching report.
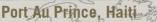

Country Level Partners:

City level consultations were co-led by the Municipalities of targeted cities, including Bangui, Bogo, Gaziantep, Mafraq, Port au Prince and Tacloban. Line Ministries and local entities from the respective countries in charge of disaster preparedness, civil protection, infrastructure, service delivery and other were also involved in the consultation process.

The following humanitarian partners, including local and international NGOs, United Nations agencies and donors were involved in the city consultations:

ACTED, AFAD, American Red Cross, Care International, Danish Refugee Council, European Commission, European Bank for Recovery and Development, GIZ, Global Communities, GOAL, IHSAN Relief and Development, International Rescue Committee, JEN, Maram Foundation, Mercy Corps, Norwegian Refugee Council, Oxfam, Premiere Urgence, REACH, SAHEM, Save the Children, UNDP, UNHCR, UNISDR, USAID, World Academy for Local Government and Democracy, Welt Hunger Hilfe, WFP.
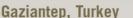
Port Au Prince, Haiti

On January 12th 2010 Haiti was struck by a 7.2 magnitude earthquake that killed over 228,000 people, displaced a further 1.5 million, and decimated the country's infrastructure, economy and social fabric. The earthquake epicenter was a mere 15 km from Port-au-Prince, the capital city, causing unprecedented damage and hardship to its 2,4 million inhabitants. The humanitarian response that followed was one of the largest to date, and was characterized by significant challenges related to adapting humanitarian action to such the highly complex and dynamic urban environment of Port-au-Prince.

Bangui, Central African Republic

The Central African Republic (CAR) has experienced violent conflict that has left some 2.7 million people, over half the population, in dire need of assistance. The situation in Bangui, the capital city, remains highly volatile as illustrated by recent spouts of violence that erupted late 2015 and displaced over 42,000 people. The ongoing violence has had a significant impact on the capacity of Bangui's municipality to meet the basic needs of its inhabitants. Municipal assets and offices have been damaged and pillaged and the violence has disrupted the socio-economic tissue that traditionally provided a safety net to many of the city's most vulnerable. While international humanitarian actors have been able to partly fill such gaps, this has been largely achieved in parallel rather than in complement and support to formal and informal municipal actors.

Gaziantep, Turkey

Located some 60 kilometers from the border with Syria, Gaziantep has strong historical and economic ties with its Syrian neighbor. When the conflict broke out in Syria, the municipality of Gaziantep was on the frontline in coping with the influx of refugees. Today an estimated 350,000 Syrians have settled in Gaziantep, as well as an additional 51,000 in nearby refugee camps. The Metropolitan Municipality has been active in providing assistance to the refugees' population since the outset of the crisis. While it first addressed humanitarian needs (distribution of blankets, first aid, aid in kind etc.), it evolved over time into sustained social services to address the needs of a population settled in the city on a middle-term perspective.

Mafraq, Jordan

Mafraq, located in northern Jordan at a mere 15 kilometers from Za'atari refugee camp and close to the Syrian border, has been severely affected by the influx of refugees from neighboring Syria since 2012. With an estimated pre-crisis population of 56,000 residents, the city and surrounding areas have faced the influx of an additional 76,200 refugees. This major population increase has severely affected the ability of local authorities and service providers to deliver basic services, resulting in social tension, frustrations and dire humanitarian consequences for vulnerable host and displaced communities.

Bogo, Guiuan and Tacloban, Philippines

Tropical Storm Haiyan hit the Eastern Visayas Region of Philippines on 8 November 2013, affecting over 14 million people across nine regions, and displacing 4 million from their homes. Cities such as Tacloban, Bangui and Bogo were severely affected and at the heart of the response, both as a result of the typhoon's destruction and of the ensuing displacement into urban and peri-urban areas of the municipality. A number of evaluations of the Haiyan response have been conducted since its declared completion in November 2014, the majority of which have identified specific lessons learnt linked to operating in dense and complex urban settings.

Key Identified Challenges of Humanitarian Response in Cities

Participants in all consultations highlighted **a lack of sufficient preparedness** to deal with the magnitude of the crisis that affected their city. The main overarching challenge for the response has been the **divergence of actions** by local actors (notably the municipality) and international actors. The failure to act in synergy has led to **sub-optimal outcomes**, as well as (in some cases) **undermining the local capacity** and **fueling community tensions**.

1.   Lack of pre-crisis preparedness

All consultations referred to the importance of preparedness to mitigate the impact of future crises and to enable an effective response. In all cities, participants reported a **lack of sufficient preparedness to deal with a crisis of such magnitude.**

→ Stakeholders in *Bangui, Mafraq, Gaziantep* and *Port-au-Prince reported* that no relevant city-level contingency plans existed prior to the crisis

→ Stakeholders in *Tacloban* and *Bogo* reported that contingency plans existed and were applied during the crisis, notably by moving the population to dedicated evacuation centers. However plans were not fully respected by the population, and in any case were not appropriate to the deal with such a large scale disasters

→ Various consultations, notably in *Tacloban* and *Port-au-Prince*, also referred to poor construction standards and to inappropriate land use as key vectors of vulnerability for populations affected by disasters

2.   Divergence in the response between local and international actors

Local and international actors are well positioned to bring complementary value during a humanitarian response, the former through their good local knowledge and presence, and the latter through their technical expertise and access to additional resource. Despite this, all consultations concluded that the humanitarian response in their city has been characterized by **diverging approaches and a dichotomy in the response between local and international actors**. Such divergence is further fueled by lack of coordination mechanisms between them.

2.1   Municipalities and other local actors lacked resources and expertise to meet the exponential needs resulting from the crisis

In all cities the crisis **significantly overstretched available local resources, resulting in an inability to meet the needs of the crisis-affected population.** Municipalities and other local actors found themselves responding to an unprecedented increase in needs with less capacity, limited or no additional funds, and with little know-how on how to adapt their long-term and standard service provision mechanisms to a crisis context.

→ In *Port au Prince, Tacloban, Bogo* and *Bangui*, local capacities were directly affected by the crisis, with municipal and other actors suffering significant losses, both among their staff and due to the destruction of institutional premises and equipment

→ Having (in some cases) lost much of their capacity, in all cities municipal and other local actors had to respond to an unprecedented increase in need from the crisis-affected population in their territory

→ In addition, municipalities such as *Mafraq* and *Gaziantep* struggled to reconcile the need for a rapid response to the needs of newly displaced populations with their long-term plans and resource allocations. Internal displacement was also a significant challenges for other responding municipalities, such as Port *au Prince, Bangui and Tacloban*

→ In all cities, municipal and other local actors struggled to access additional resources available through international or national emergency funding decisions, which primarily benefitted international or national actors

2.2 International humanitarian actors failed to understand local dynamics and to engage with local stakeholders, and were driven by sector-, rather than settlement-based planning

All consultations reported that **international humanitarian actors struggled to understand local community, regulatory and city management dynamics.** With some exceptions, international actors **failed to support or leverage upon local response capacities**, and to ensure their action fed into or – at a minimum – did not negatively affect longer-term city recovery plans and social cohesion among affected populations. To a large extent, **difficulties in engaging with local actors have been related to the sector-organisation and short term program cycle of the international humanitarian response**.

→ Many consultations reported that the number of international actors that eventually arrived in the city was overwhelming. In *Tacloban*, for example, participants referred to a large, exogenous and heterogeneous group of international actors, whose structure, role and responsibility was often not understood by local stakeholders

→ In *Mafraq and Tacloban*, consultations highlighted the limitations posed by international actors' reliance on short-term and sector-specific funding, which hinders a multi-sector and community-based response (which usually constitutes the municipal way of working on a daily basis), and a capacity to integrate emergency response activities to longer-term recovery and urban planning

→ In *Bangui and Mafraq*, it was pointed out that international actors were often unaware of community dynamics: as exogenous entities, international responders face serious challenges in understanding local community dynamics, local response capacity and cultural sensitivities, among other issues

→ The *Mafraq, Gaziantep and Tacloban* consultations also referred to a difficulty by international actors to understand national and local frameworks and legislations, such as the role of local and national authorities and issues related to land tenure-ship

→ In *Bogo*, international actors were reported as setting their own priorities, based on assessments conducted with little or no systematized consultation and engagement with local municipalities or other local actors

2.3 Lack of city-level multi-stakeholder coordination mechanisms contributed to the divergence between international and local actors

The consultations identified a **lack of communication channels and coordination structures (a) between international, national and local stakeholders; and (b) for city-level multi-sector coordination.** This has further contributed to diverging approaches between local and international actors.

→ Various consultations (including *Port-au Prince, Bangui, Mafraq, Gaziantep* and *Tacloban*) reported that channels to coordinate among different layers of responders (international, national, municipal, community) were not established and systematized in the local context

→ When established, such mechanisms were centralized at a national-level, with the national government as the only counterpart to the international community. As noted in *Mafraq*, decentralisation of such coordination mechanisms at a city-level are missing, hindering the meaningful involvement of sub-national stakeholders in response planning and coordination

→ Various consultations, notably *Mafraq* and *Gaziantep*, reported a lack of communication and reporting between international humanitarian actors and municipal authorities. *Tacloban* referred to a lack of accountability mechanisms for international actors vis-à-vis local authorities and populations

3. Consequences of diverging trends between international and local actors

All consultations agreed that **synergetic action between international and local actors would lead to a better humanitarian response**. I**n some cases the lack of partnership** between local and international actors directly **resulted in undermining municipal and local capacity** in the longer term, **as well as fueling community tension**.

3.1 Sub-optimal response

Various consultations referred to the **loss in effectiveness, efficiency and relevance of the humanitarian response because of the failure to promote synergies between international and local actors**.

→ The consultations in *Port-au-Prince, Tacloban* and *Mafraq* reported that lack of coordination has resulted in bad targeting, misconceptions and duplication

→ *Tacloban* referred to confusion and contradictory approaches between the municipality and international actors in relation to No Build Zones, ultimately leading to piecemeal and insufficient action to support inhabitants of informal settlements who were among the most affected

→ In *Mafraq*, it was highlighted that the lack of coordination with authorities resulted in many programs by international actors being delayed

→ *Tacloban* mentioned tent distribution in urban areas as an example of how a failure to consult local actors has resulted in inappropriate solutions

→ In *Bangui,* the lack of coordination was mentioned as contributing to a response characterized by significant information gaps

3.2 Undermining local systems

Some consultations reported that **by failing to understand and leverage on local capacity, international actors have contributed to undermining local systems and services**.

→ In *Bangui*, it was underlined that municipal actors have become reliant on INGOs to provide basic services and lack the capacity and resources to take back the responsibility

→ In *Mafraq*, municipal stakeholders were reported as becoming reliant on external support to meet the needs related to the refugee influx, resulting in an initial lack of local ownership and oversight of the response

→ More generally, various consultations (notably *Mafraq and Gaziantep*) reported that the short-term and sectorial characteristics of the international aid system is at odds with the longer-term, territorial based city planning and resource mobilization cycles

3.3 Fueling community tensions

In some cases, **the uncoordinated response of international actors has been reported as contributing to fueling community tensions**:

→ In *Mafraq and Gaziantep*, it was reported that perceptions of bias in aid delivery and service provision towards refugees has led to tensions between refugees and host communities

→ In *Bangui*, international actors were reported as contributing to already conflictual power dynamics by failing to engage with all stakeholders at community level and failing to understand local sensitivities and dynamics

Recommendations for future urban crisis responses

The current humanitarian architecture is built around sector-specific planning, short-term funding and program cycles, and national level coordination. This **is not appropriate in the** highly complex and dynamic **environments witnessed in urban crises, where humanitarian best practices point instead to holistic, longer term action and higher levels of engagement with sub-national actors. In order to promote a more effective and efficient localized response to urban crisis, humanitarian systems will need to be adapted.** The city consultations point to the following recommendations to achieve this:

1. **All consultations reported that humanitarian response should systematically understand, support and build on local capacity, notably of municipalities and service providers, but also of local civil society actors.**

   a. Local capacity assessments should be systematically rolled out to understand how services and community support mechanisms have been affected by a crisis
   b. Based on the identified capacity gaps, humanitarian actors should, in as far as possible, act in synergy with local actors and/or support them directly in restoring their capacity
   c. Joint planning tools and processes between international and local stakeholders should be established to promote coordinated approaches and partnerships in a city-level response

→ During the *Mafraq* consultations, it was recommended that a mapping of local stakeholders should be conducted at the onset of a crisis and widely disseminated. It should identify key actors that engage with the humanitarian response and pinpoint key areas of weakness in the structures to identify capacity building needs.

> **Best practice: Engaging communities and local government in area based response**
> **Where?** `Mafraq, Jordan`
> **Who?** `NGO Consortia within the framework of the USAID Community Engagement Project`
> The USAID Community Engagement Project implemented by various NGOs and Global Communities aims to strengthen community organizations and the response efforts of local government in three Jordanian governorates, including Mafraq city. By gathering and supporting community members, NGOs, CBOs, and local government, the project has identified activities to improve resilience, strengthen social cohesion, and improve quality of life for all community residents

2. **City consultations identified settlement-based approaches as most appropriate for the coordination, planning and implementation of urban humanitarian response.** This will require a shift in the humanitarian system in two ways:

    a. From its current sector-centred planning based on the identification of individual needs towards multi-sector, spatial planning in a given territory of affected cities – such as a neighbourhood, quartier, barangay, manteqa, arrodissement, etc.

    b. From exogenous responses coordinated at national level, to a community-based response which involves and leverages upon local capacity and structures

→ As mentioned in the *Tacloban* consultations, "humanitarian actors should link with […] community level stakeholders to understand their multi-sector needs and propose a holistic, area-based response plan that builds on local capacity"

Best practice: Participatory and integrated approach to reconstruction, according to a neighbourhood approach
Where? Port-au-Prince, Haiti
Who? Global Communities and Project Concern International Funded by OFDA/USAID
The Katye Programme ("neighbourhood" in creole) allowed for the reconstruction of a community life in the Ravine Pintade neighbourhood, in central Port-au-Prince, which was completely destroyed by the earthquake. This complete and multi-sectoral programme implemented the demolition of damaged infrastructures, the evacuation of debris, the construction of shelters and community healthcare and water supply infrastructures, as well as the amelioration of drainage system, street planning and their equipment. The programme's success was largely due to its innovative approach, according to which community members have actively contributed to the programme planning and to the definition of priorities in terms of needs to cover. The objective was to create a safer, cleaner and more liveable environment for communities affected by the earthquake. Officially ended in May 2012, the "Katye" programme helped residents, who had been forcibly displaced, to return to their homes, in a neighbourhood they themselves transformed through their efforts.

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3. **All consultations pointed to the need for longer term approaches in which humanitarian action builds the resilience of affected cities and communities from its outset.**

    a. Humanitarian response plans should be, as far as possible, aligned to city development plans, which in turn should be adapted to enable a response to the crisis

    b. Municipalities should be supported to identify modalities to enable a response to the crisis through its existing structures and in line with its longer term plans

    c. From the outset of a response, humanitarian action should promote the resilience of crisis affected populations and of city institutions and actors. Humanitarian action should build on city dynamics and plans, ensuring complementary whenever possible to longer term development goals or at least not undermining such goals

    d. Peer-to-peer support mechanisms between municipalities could be piloted as a means to support local authorities of cities in crisis with technical expertise and by sharing experiences

→ In *Gaziantep*, participants to the consultations stressed the need for sustainable policies to face the migration influx which build the resilience of both refugees and host communities. They also highlighted that city plans must be adapted in times of crisis to enable a better adaptation of services and resources.

Best practice: The Sub-Directorate for Migration Affairs of Gaziantep

Metropolitan Municipality
Where? `Gaziantep, Turkey`
Who? `The Metropolitan Municipality`
Throughout the crisis, the Gaziantep Metropolitan Municipality has been active in providing assistance to refugee populations. Humanitarian actions have evolved over time into the provision of sustained social services to address the needs of a population settled in the city on a medium-term perspective. The Sub-Directorate for Migration Affairs of the Metropolitan Municipality of Gaziantep is a municipal innovation which provides city-scale management and oversight of migration-related activities. Gaziantep Metropolitan Municipality has been the first and only municipality in Turkey to establish such directorate. The department has enabled coordination of all municipal activities related to the crisis, as well as planning for longer term approaches. It is also a very important step in terms of formal recognition of the role of municipalities in migration management.

4. **Humanitarian funding cycles and modalities should be adapted to enable longer term programming and increased funding to local actors.**

   a. Longer-term humanitarian funding is necessary in order to enable longer-term planning which builds city and community resilience, as well as meeting the immediate basic needs of crisis-affected populations

   b. In parallel, funding mechanisms should be established to better enable direct support to local actors such as municipalities, service providers and local civil society – which are currently excluded from funding mechanisms

→ The *Bogo* consultation recommends that international and national emergency funding mechanisms are also accessible by local authorities to facilitate their role in crisis response and in the re-establishment of services. In *Mafraq*, it was recommended that local, national and international humanitarian stakeholders develop joint funding and response plans to submit to donors.

Best practice: Adopt a Barangay
Where? `Bogo, Philippines`
Who? `City government`
The Bogo city government implemented an innovative and efficient initiative to promote settlement level, multi-sectorial partnership between local communities and international humanitarian actors. The Adopt a Barangai initiative matched local needs (as assessed by the city) with international resources and expertise, enabling the city to stay at the centre of reconstruction planning, facilitate the humanitarian coordination by avoiding project overlap and to match aid organizations with needs in each affected village. All reconstruction projects were requested to mainstream DRR and resilience norms.

5. **Establish city-level coordination mechanisms to coordinate the humanitarian response between all stakeholders, including international, national and local communities:**

   a. International, national and local actors (including authorities, civil society, service providers, etc.) should be systematically involved in decentralized city-level humanitarian coordination mechanisms

   b. Such mechanisms should be established since the onset of the crisis

   c. Through this coordination, crisis response plans will intrinsically become more integrated into local plans and responses, and potentially more forward-looking and informed by multiple stakeholders.

→ The *Bangui* consultations recommend that coordination mechanisms between local authorities and humanitarian actors are established at city and neighbourhood (*arrondissement*) level in the early phases of a crisis, with the aim to promote information sharing; develop joint preparedness and response plans; and ensure proper handover to local authorities of specific services & infrastructure provided by humanitarian actors.

Best practice: Coordination mechanisms between local and international actors

Where? `Bangui, Central African Republic`
Who? `Arrondissement mayors`

Some mayors of arrondissements established a local committee responsible for coordination with aid actors. Such committees include various profiles from the municipality, such as local authorities and community leaders and sector-specific specialists (health, education, water, etc.) that can liaise with humanitarian partners working under their specific sector of expertise.

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6. **Systematically build a better mutual understanding among international, national and local actors:**

   a. International actors must systematically ensure that they gain a good understanding of the structure and roles of local actors. This understanding will be the basis of inclusive communication and coordination channels with relevant governmental and local counterparts.

   b. International actors should also support local actors in understanding how the international aid system is structured and functions. This will facilitate local actors' engagement with international stakeholders.

→ Participants in the *Gaziantep* consultations recommended that it would be beneficial to develop a simple brochure for international actors to present the various municipal and national bodies in the city and explain their role in the response.

Best practice: Engaging with the cluster system

Where? `Tacloban, Philippines`
Who? `Municipal authorities`

Following the crisis, municipal authorities have adopted a cluster-like coordination system to facilitate engagement with humanitarian actors. Each 'cluster' is led by a municipal department, promoting ownership by local authorities and providing clear interlocutors to humanitarian actors.

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7. **Continue investing in preparedness, knowledge and capacity transfer**

   a. Investing in preparedness is key for increased resilience and response capacity of affected communities and local actors, including municipalities.

   b. Ensuring transfer of knowledge and capacities to local responders, including municipalities, will also enable longer-term sustainability of the response, improved response to future shocks and higher capacity of local actors to play a more central role in crisis prevention and management.

   c. National and local actors need to integrate crisis preparedness but also crisis response within their local plans and budgets, in order to ensure that municipal and local authorities have an increased capacity to support affected populations within the context of each crisis. Ensuring that local actors have the financial and

physical means to respond to a crisis will be key step in ensuring resilience is a core component of the response from day one.

→ In *Port-au-Prince* participants identified preparedness as a key priority for national and sub-national actors. In *Tacloban*, it was recommended that all humanitarian actors mainstream preparedness components in their programming to build the capacity of local authorities and communities

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Best practice: Long term planning in DRRM

Where? `Bogo, Philippines`
Who? `City government`

Bogo city has been working since many years in the DRRM sector, with dedicated financial resources to implement its DRRM strategy. The City of Bogo has ensured education and sensitization of its populations on DRRM issues and is preparing new approaches targeting the full spectrum of the population. Moreover, the city plans to set-up actions to adapt public infrastructures in order to be able to use them as primary evacuation centres in case of crisis.

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8. **Humanitarian response should mainstream components aimed at promoting harmony and mitigating tensions among communities**

   a. In contexts of displacement, responses should be inclusive of both displaced and host populations to ensure needs are met across population groups and that aid does not increase stress on communities and generate or reinforce tensions.
   b. In contexts of conflict, it is key to strengthen messages of social cohesion among crisis-affected populations

→ During the *Mafraq* consultations it was noted that aid was heavily focused on refugee populations, discarding needs and increased vulnerability of host communities, and negatively affected the relations between displaced and host populations, leading to tensions and issues related to social cohesion.

Best practice: area-based responses to returns

Where? `Bangui, CAR`
Who: `OCHA, ACTED, DRC, NRC, Oxfam, PU-AMI`

With expected returns taking place in the coming months, social cohesion and mitigation of community tensions will be key to a sustainable and peaceful return process. Within this framework, humanitarian stakeholders have jointly developed a neighborhood-based response plan in areas of Bangui which are likely to witness returns. Humanitarian partners are working closely with affected communities and local authorities to assess the socio-economic profile of the neighborhood, needs and the social dynamics between displaced and host communities. Based on this analysis, if a response is deemed necessary, humanitarian partners will plan a multi-sectorial intervention, with each partner focusing on an area of expertise, to support local response capacities and address needs of affected populations through a multi-sectorial and neighborhood-based framework.